

May 11, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

0678 '99 MAY 17 A9:51

Re: Docket No. 98N-1038, Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food

To whom it may concern:

I would like to express concern regarding a recent proposal to eliminate labeling requirements for irradiated foods. I strongly believe that I and all citizens/consumers in this country have a right to make informed decisions about the foods we purchase and consume. This is not just a philosophical issue when it comes to food irradiation. Irradiation affects food quality. In recent reports, I have read that irradiated fats may become rancid and that some foods may lose up to 20% of their vitamins. No doubt there are other ways irradiation affects food quality. We should be given the information to evaluate foods not only based on ingredients and nutritional content, but also on a process that may alter quality.

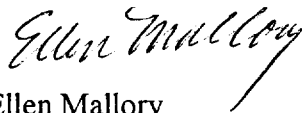
I support the recommendation by the Center for Science in the Public Interest regarding labeling of irradiated foods:

"any foods, or any foods containing ingredients that have been treated by irradiation, should be labeled with a written statement on the principal display panel indicating such treatment. The statement should be easy to read and placed in close proximity to the name of the food and accompanied by the international symbol. If the food is unpackaged, this information should be clearly displayed on a poster in plain view and adjacent to where the product is displayed for sale."

Like other labels, irradiation labels are required by the FDA to be truthful and not misleading. I believe that the terms "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation" should be retained. Any phrase involving the word "pasteurization" is misleading because pasteurization is an entirely different process of rapid heating and cooling. The use of the radura symbol should be retained also, but not used exclusively since not all consumers are familiar with this symbol. The labeling and radura symbol must be clearly understandable to all consumers at the point of purchase.

I urge you to extend the comment period past its current end date of May 18 to allow more concerned citizens the time to write in about this issue. Also, please place the comments received on the Internet so that the public can be informed about who is participating in this comment process.

Sincerely,



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